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## BACKED BY INDUSTRY CASH, THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES HANDS THE PUBLIC LANDS TO OIL AND GAS INTERESTS

Nineteen Republicans voted the Secure American Energy Act out of committee this month. They've collectively received millions from oil and gas interests.

JIMMY TOBIAS · NOV 16, 2017

The Secure American Energy Act, which passed out of the House Natural Resources Committee earlier this month, is a one-stop case study in how Washington, D.C., actually works.

The act is classic industry-backed legislation, and reflects the needs and desires of oil and gas interests. Among other provisions, the bill largely relinquishes federal authority over public lands oil and gas drilling to state governments. It deprives future presidents of their authority to declare marine national monuments in federally owned waters. It weakens protections for marine mammals that live in offshore oil and gas areas. It all but eliminates the Bureau of Land Management's ability to regulate fracking on federal land. It rolls back Obama-era protections in the Arctic. It encourages the Department of the Interior to open up more lands for drilling in the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska.

Nick Lund, a staffer with the National Parks Conservation Association, which opposes the bill, says it would provide "an easier path to [oil and gas] drilling with less public input and oversight and with weakened environmental standards."

Rob Bishop (R-Utah), the chair of the House Natural Resources Committee, has a different take. "With this legislation," he said in a recent statement "we can unlock our vast energy potential, advance American energy dominance and generate revenues at all levels of government."

In a way, of course, he's right. The bill is about energy dominance—the energy industry's dominance over Congress.

Consider, for instance, the elected representatives who voted for the bill. Of the 19 Republicans who passed the Secure American Energy Act out of committee on November 8th, all but three have received campaign financing from oil industry interests. Here, courtesy of the Center for Responsive Politics, is the breakdown of money in oil and gas industry campaign contributions:

- Rob Bishop (R-Utah): More than \$400,000.
- Doug Lamborn (R-Colorado): More than \$290,000.
- Don Young (R-Alaska): More than \$1.3 million.
- Steve Pearce (R-New Mexico): More than \$2 million.
- Tom McClintock (R-California): More than \$210,000.
- Glenn Thompson (R-Pennsylvania): More than \$360,000.
- Paul Gosar (R-Arizona): More than \$61,000.
- Scott Tipton (R-Colorado): More than \$460,000.
- Doug LaMalfa (R-California): More than \$85,000.
- Jeff Denham (R-California): More than \$450,000.
- Paul Cook (R-California): More than \$40,000.
- Bruce Westerman (R-Arkansas): More than \$110,000.
- Jody Hice (R-Georgia): More than \$20,000.
- Liz Cheney (R-Wyoming): More than \$17,000.
- Greg Gianforte (R-Montana): More than \$90,000.
- Rob Wittman (R-Virginia): More than \$75,000.

All totaled, oil and gas interests have lavished them with more than \$6 million. The Secure American Energy Act, which will soon be taken up by the House of Representatives, is the outcome.